

REMARKS

The Examiner issued a second advisory action dated September 12, 2005 in this application, refusing to enter Applicants' amendments in the response to the final Office Action filed May 9, 2005. Of note, after receipt of the first advisory action dated June 17, 2005, Applicants' counsel conducted multiple telephone interviews with the Examiner and was led to believe that the Examiner would enter the amendments proposed after the final Office Action. Indeed, pursuant to the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants' counsel even filed a supplemental response to the final Office Action on August 8, 2005 to discuss the difference between the claimed invention and two prior art documents provided by the Examiner, after issuance of the first advisory action.

Below is brief description of the amendments at issue and the issues raised in the second advisory action:

In the response to the final Office Action, Applicants amended claim 1 to include all the limitations of claim 19 and amended claim 4 to include all the limitations of claim 14. (Claim 19 depends from claim 18, which in turn depends from claim 1; and claim 14 depend from claim 9, which in turn depends from claim 4.) In the second advisory action, the Examiner asserts that claims 1 and 4, thus amended, would differ in scope from any of the previously considered claims. He proceeds to conclude that the proposed amendments have raised new issues, necessitating new consideration or search, and declines to enter them.

Applicants' counsel conducted a telephone interview with the Examiner and Supervisory Examiner Long Le on October 4, 2005. In the interview, both maintained their position. On the other hand, they agreed to reconsider this application if claim 1 is amended to include the limitations of both claims 18 and 19 and claim 4 is amended to include the limitations of both claims 9 and 14. The Examiner acknowledged that claims 1 and 4, thus amended, are respectively identical in scope to claims 19 and 14, which have already been considered.

Applicants have incorporated the limitations of claims 18 and 19 into claim 1 and the limitations of claims 9 and 14 into claim 4, thereby necessitating cancellation of claims 9, 14, 18, and 19 and change of dependency to claim 16. Applicants submit that amended claims 1 and 4, as well as claims 5-8, 16, and 20 dependent therefrom, are in condition for allowance in view of the remarks presented in the response to the final Office Action.

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Note that current claims 21-24 are identical to claims 21-24 presented in the response to the first Office Action filed November 15, 2005. These claims had been entered before the final Office Action was issued. Thus, they should also be considered in view of the remarks presented in the response to the final Office Action. Applicants respectfully request allowance of these claims.

Applicants believe that no fee is due. However, if Applicants err in making this assertion, please apply any charges to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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